

Remarks/Arguments

In the January 30, 2006 office action, claim 5 was objected to because it depends from cancelled claim 4. Claim 11 was objected to for lack of antecedent basis for "the center row."

In the January 30, 2006 office action, claims 11 and 18 were rejected under section 102(b) as being anticipated by Akgulian et al (US Patent No. 3,731,469). Claims 1, 2, 5 and 7-10 were rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ronning (US Patent No. 1,957,079) in view of Akgulian et al (US Patent No. 3,613,337) and Rhoades et al (US Patent No. 2,924,928). Claim 3 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ronning, Akgulian '337 and Rhoades, and further in view of Bednar et al (US Patent No. 6,336,312). Claim 12 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian in view of Ronning. Claim 13 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian et al and Ronning in view of Worthington (US Patent No. 1,330,293). Claim 15 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian in view of Hornung (US Patent No. 6,684,616). Claim 16 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian in view of Gerzanich (US Patent No. 4,341,059). Claim 17 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian in view of Speiser (US Patent No. 3,410,063). Claims 19 and 22 were rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ronning in view of Rhoades.

Claim 1 is amended to specify an uncovered area in front of the operator module between the left rail and right rail, and a center cutting unit in the second row having a width less than the distance between the left rail and the right rail and positioned in the uncovered area between the left rail and the right rail so that it is visible from the operator module.

Claim 5 is amended to depend on claim 1.

Claim 11 is amended to cure the antecedent basis rejection and to specify a center cutting unit in the second row positioned between and having a width less than the distance between the left rail and the right rail, and an operator module mounted to the chassis at least primarily behind the second row of cutting units so that the center cutting unit is visible from the operator module.

Claim 19 is amended to specify the first row includes two cutting units less than 18 inches in front of the front pair of wheels and the second row including three cutting units less than 18 inches behind the front pair of wheels, and a center cutting unit in the second row being positioned entirely between the pair of rails in the mowing position and visible from the operator module.

Claim 1 is patentable over Ronning, Akgulian et al '337 and Rhoades. Neither Ronning, Akgulian et al '337, nor Rhoades show a center cutting unit in the second row that is visible from the operator module. Ronning's cutting unit D would not be visible from Ronning's operator station 13. Akgulian's center mower 31 is positioned directly under operator's seat 12, so it would not be visible from the operator's seat. Rhoades lacks a center cutting unit in a second row.

Additionally, claim 1 is patentable because Akgulian et al '337 fails to show an uncovered area in front of the operator module between a left rail and right rail, and fails to show a center cutting unit in the second row having a width less than the distance between the left and right rails. Akgulian et al '337 relates to center mower 31 that is wider than the distance between the parallel members of frame 10. Ronning's cutting units A-E are all in front of the vehicle's front wheels, and must be shifted when Ronning's tractor is steered.

Claims 2, 5 and 7-10 are patentable over Ronning, Akgulian et al '337 and Rhoades et al for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which they depend.

Claim 3 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends. Additionally, Bednar fails to show an uncovered area in front of the operator module between a left rail and right rail, or a center cutting unit in the second row having a width less than the distance between the left and right rails and positioned in the uncovered area between the left and right rails so that it is visible from the operator module.

Claim 11 is patentable over Akgulian et al '469. Akgulian et al '469 fails to show a center cutting unit in the second row positioned between and having a width less than the distance between the left rail and the right rail, and also fails to show an operator module mounted to the chassis at least primarily behind the second row of cutting units so that the center cutting unit is visible from the operator module. Instead, Akgulian et al '469 shows center mower 11 having a width greater than the distance between the two members of tractor 10. Akgulian et al '469 does not show an operator module, nor does it suggest a center mower that would be visible from

an operator module.

Claim 12 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 11 on which it depends. Additionally, neither Akgulian nor Ronning show a portion of each rail that is under at least one of the operator module and the power supply. Akgulian fails to disclose a portion of the rails under the operator module and power supply, and fails to show a front portion of the rails being uncovered. Ronning's frame members 56 do not go under and do not extend as far back as operator station 13.

Claim 13 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claims 11 and 12 on which it depends. Additionally, Akgulian, Ronning and Worthington fail to show a left rail and right rail that are generally parallel to each other and are spaced farther apart from each other adjacent the front end of the chassis than the rear end of the chassis. Worthington shows the opposite: side-girders 1 are closer together at the front of Worthington's mower.

Claim 15 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 11 on which it depends. Additionally, the cited references fail to show a power supply mounted to the chassis adjacent the rear end of the chassis and at least primarily behind the operator module and the pair of rear wheels, with a hood over the power supply having a screened air intake. Hornung relates to an air induction system for a front engine mower, not a mower with a power supply behind the operator module.

Claim 16 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 11 on which it depends. Additionally, Akgulian and Gerzanich fail to show cutting units that are in front of and behind non-driven and non-steered front wheels.

Claim 17 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 11 on which it depends.

Claim 18 is patentable over Akgulian et al '469 for at least the same reasons as claim 11 on which it depends.

Claim 19 is patentable over Ronning and Rhoades. Ronning and Rhoades fail to show a first row including two cutting units less than 18 inches in front of the front pair of wheels and a second row including three cutting units less than 18 inches behind the front pair of wheels; each of the cutting units being at least primarily uncovered by the operator module and the power supply in a mowing position, a center cutting unit in the second row being positioned entirely between the pair of rails in the mowing position and visible from the operator module. Ronning's mowers A-E are more than 18 inches from the front wheels, and

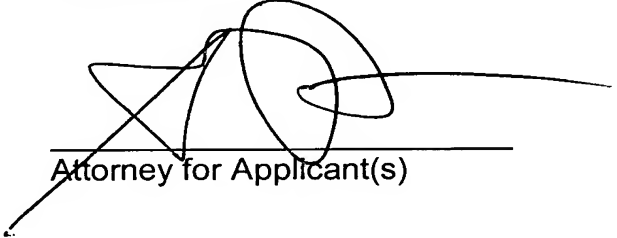
Ronning's center mower D would not be visible from operator station 13. Rhoades et al shows rotary cutter 11 behind front wheels 8, and a pair of trailing mowers in Fig. 13.

Claim 22 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 19 on which it depends.

In conclusion, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully,



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